(b) if so, whether Government has evolved any comprehensive plan to increase the production of cashew in the country and the details thereof;

(c) whether there is a proposal for setting up of a Cashew Board headquartered at Kollam in Kerala; and

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the details of steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) No Sir. On the contrary, the production of raw cashew nuts in India during the last five years as estimated by the Directorate of Cashewnut and Cocoa Development, have increased from 5.06 lakh MTs in 2002-03 to 6.20 lakh MTs in 2006-07.

(c) and (d) The Government had commissioned a study by the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) to look into the feasibility of establishing a Cashew Board. The IIFT has given its interim report on the subject. This report is under examination by the Government.

Crisis in traditional export oriented industries due to rupee appreciation

636. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that export oriented traditional industries particularly cashew are facing serious crisis due to continued rupee appreciation;

(b) if so, the details of the sectors affected by this phenomenon;

(c) whether Government has taken steps to protect the interest of such industries; and

(d) if so, the details of the measures taken by the Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Some of the traditional sectors which have shown negative export growth for the period ending December, 2007 as compared to the same period last year are tea (-9.4%), cashew (-9.9%), foods and vegetables (-32.3%), Marine products (-50-1%), leather and leather manufacturing (-19-6%), carpet (-37.5%), handicrafts excluding hand-made carpets (-75.5%).

(c) and (d) With a view to provide relief to the exporters to check the adverse effect of rupee appreciation, Government has taken many steps which *inter-alia* include accelerated reimbursement of certain dues to exporters, reduction in the rate of interest on pre-shipment and post-shipment credit, revision in drawback rates and Duty Entitlement Passbook Scheme (DEPB) rates, refund/exemption of service tax in respect of certain services involved in exports, provision of payment of interest on EEFC balances, reduction of Export Credit and Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) premia rates.

Threat to Indian cardamon due to cheap imports

637. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian cardamom is likely to face threat from cardamom of Guatemala due to cheap import;

(b) if so, the price difference between Indian cardamom and the cardamom from Guatemala; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to protect the interests of cardamom growers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Price difference between Indian cardamom and the Guatemalan cardamom is given below:

Grade	Price of India Cardamom		Price of Guatemalan Cardamom	
	(Rs./Kg)	(US$/Kg)	(Rs./Kg)	(US$/Kg)
AGEB	695	17.6	524	13.25
AGB	630	15.9	484	12.25
AGS	615	15.6	444	11.25
AGS-I	595	15.1	361	9.13
Un-graded	599	15.2	310	7.86

(c) 70% duty is levied on cardamom imported. The Spices Board is sending the domestic price informaiton on a weekly basis to all the major Customs to alert them on the import of cheap Guatemalan cardamom. The Spices Board is also monitoring the import of cardamom on a monthly basis.

India's tobacco export

638. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the share of India' tobacco export in the international market during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that India's tobacco attracts lower price as compared to the Brazillian tobacco;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the reasons for India not being able to achieve her proportionate share of tobacco used in the international cigarette markets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) The share of India's tobacco export in international market for last three years is as follow: